

FACT SHEET 02/94

February 1994

IMPORTING HAZARDOUS CARGO

Importers of hazardous substances should be aware that they are obliged to comply with certain requirements on receipt and unpacking of the cargo.

These requirements apply to ensure the safety of all involved in the handling of equipment which has been used to transport hazardous goods:

- all dangerous goods labels attached to the outside of the container must be removed before the container is returned to the nominated empty container park.

Labels should be *fully removed*, not simply masked or painted over.

Australian regulations covering the transport of hazardous goods by road or rail specifically require labels to be removed from empty containers.

- after the container has been unpacked, it should be thoroughly cleaned, to a point where no residues of cargo can be detected, either by sight or smell.

This requirement stems from the conditions of the carrier's contract of carriage, which provide for containers to be returned to the empty container park nominated by the carrier in a clean condition.

It should be noted that the presence of any residue in a container could constitute a breach of this condition, and could render the importer liable for any damages or injury that may be caused by those residues.

This latter requirement is one which has recently been brought to the Chamber's attention following a number of incidents at empty container parks, where containers are opened for servicing and preparation for re-use.

It is inappropriate for cleaning of residues to be carried out by container park staff, who will be unaware of the nature of those residues and may well risk injury through taking inappropriate action.

It is of crucial importance that the importer, who is the party best able to respond to the characteristics of the cargo, ensure that these requirements are fulfilled.

Inquiries regarding the conditions of the carrier's contract of carriage, and the requirements this places upon importers, should be directed to the carrier concerned.

* * * * *

<p>The Australian Chamber of Shipping Ltd and its employees and agents take no responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions in this publication. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not of the Chamber. No warranty is given and no liability is accepted.</p>
--

* * * * *